

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5031
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AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3355

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: ELECTORAL TENSION EASES AS DOMINICANS AWAIT ELECTORAL
BOARD ACTIONS

REF: A) SANTO DOMINGO 3331; B) SANTO DOMINGO 3330

1. THE MEETING SATURDAY BETWEEN PRESIDENT BALAGUER AND
PRESIDENT-ELECT ANTONIO GUZMAN (REK A) SERVED ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY TO REDUCE THE HIGH STATE OF ANXIETY WHICH
SEEMED TO GRIP DOMINICANS LAST WEEK. LISTIN DIARIO'S
BANNER HEADLINE THIS MORNING WAS "BALAGUER AND GUZMAN
MEETING CAUSES RELIEF." LISTIN NOTED AS FACTORS OF
MEETING WHICH GAVE REASON FOR CONFIDENCE FACT THAT FOR
FIRST TIME SINCE ELECTIONS BALAGUER AND GUZMAN WERE PHOTO-
GRAPHED TOGETHER, THE LENGTH OF THE MEETING (1 HR. 20 MIN.),
AND THE VARIETY OF THEMES DEALT WITH ACCORDING TO GUZMAN'S
ACCOUNT. THE IMPLICATION WHICH DOMINICANS GENERALLY DRAW

FROM ALL THIS IS THAT BALAGUER APPARENTLY DOES PLAN TO TURN
POWER OVER TO GUZMAN.

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2. OTHER ELEMENTS WHICH ALSO APPEAR TO BE HELPING
EASE CURRENT ELECTORAL ATMOSPHERE ARE REJECTION
SATURDAY OF REFORMISTA CHALLENGES BY ELECTORAL BOARD
OF DISTRICT (REF A), RECENT US ACTIONS (REF B) AND
GROWING PRESSURE BY CIVIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS AND
THE CHURCH. YESTERDAY ARCHBISHOP POLANCO BRITO OF HIGUEY
CALLED FOR RESPECT FOR THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS AND

ESPECIALLY ASKED LEADERS OF THE REFORMISTA PARTY TO "RECOGNIZE WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT." THE HIGUEY CEREMONY, CELEBRATING THE INSTALLATION OF THE RESTORED PAINTING OF THE VUZUIN OF ALTAGRACIA, WAS ATTENDED BY THE CHURCH HIERARCHY AND A PROMINENT LAYMAN: ANTONIO GUZMAN.

3. THUS THE COUNTRY IS GOING THROUGH THE DOWN SIDE OF ONE MORE EMOTIONAL SURGE CONNECTED TO THE ELECTORAL CRISIS. A LITTLE CALMER NOW, DOMINICANS ARE WATCHING FUTURE ACTIONS OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) WHICH RESUMED HEARINGS ON ELECTORAL CHALLENGES THIS MORNING. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE JCE WILL TAKE SOME TIME STILL BEFORE GIVING A FINAL VERDICT. ON SATURDAY THE JCE ISSUED A STATEMENT SHOWING THE DATES ON WHICH OFFICIAL RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED IN THE PAST THREE ELECTIONS: 1966 - JUNE 21; 1970 - JULY 3; AND 1974 - JULY 5. THE CONCLUSION ONE IS PRESUMABLY SUPPOSED TO DRAW IS THAT SUCH DELAYS ARE PERFECTLY NORMAL. ALSO IN TODAY'S PRESS, JCE INTERIM CHAIRMAN HUGO VARGAS SUBERVI IS QUOTED AS SAYING JCE DECISION COULD TAKE FIFTEEN DAYS "DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES."

4. HOWEVER, DESPITE SOME EASING OF TENSION THERE WERE SIGNS OF AMBIVALENCE IN THE SITUATION. THE UTILIZATION BY THE JCE OF THE CHILEAN TECHNICIANS TO CARRY OUT THE INVESTIGATION OF THE VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS REMAINS CAUSE FOR SUSPICION. TODAY IN THE PRD DAILY BROADCAST CONFIDENTIAL

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"TRIBUNA DEMOCRATICA," PRD SEC GEN JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ REJECTED THE OFFER OF JCE INTERIM CHAIRMAN VARGAS SUBERVI FOR PRD REPRESENTATIVES TO BE PRESENT DURING THE INVESTIGATION OF THE CHILEANS. PENA SAID THE PRD WOULD NOT HAVE ITS TECHNICIANS BE MERE "SPECTATORS" TO A LABOR WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE BY DOMINICANS AND BLASTED THE JCE FOR USING TECHNICIANS FROM "THE PINOCHET DICTATORSHIP." PENA ALSO ACCUSED THE REFORMISTA PARTY OF MAINTAINING A CLANDESTINE OFFICE WHICH CONTINUES TO ISSUE FALSE ELECTORAL CARDS EN MASSE.

5. IN ADDITION, THE NEW CALM MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN BROKEN BY NEWS TODAY THAT EARLY THIS MORNING A GROUP OF UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS ENTERED THE JCE AND ABSCONDED WITH THREE THOUSAND BLANK VOTER IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND VOTER REGISTRAION FORMS. THE OCCURRENCE WAS LABELED "GRAVE AND DELICATE" BY JCE CHAIRMAN VARGAS SUBERVI WHO ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION BY THE POLICE.

6. COMMENT: UNTIL JCE GIVES ITS DECISION SITUATION IS BOUND TO BE LADEN WITH UNDERLYING TENSION AND POSSIBILITY OF NEW UPS AND DOWNS. AS REFORMISTAS SEEM TO

BE DETERMINED TO CARRY THEIR CASE THROUGH TO THE END -- AND
BALAGUER APPARENTLY FEELS HE MUST PERMIT THIS IN ORDER BOTH TO
PLACATE HIS HARDLINERS TO ESTABLISH A LONGER TERM BASIS FOR PARTY
INFLUENCE AND REBUILDING--THIS UNFORTUNATE ROLLERCOASTER RIDE
WILL APPARENTLY CONTINUE FOR AWHILE.
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